

close the door on this thing. And when he suggests that he will introduce a bill which will vary from this resolution in the direction of having a judge associated with an officer of the board, I ask him most earnestly to reconsider that too. He proposes to have a judge in association with some officer, and a veteran. Who is going to be the ruling party? Will the officer and the veteran be able to overrule the judge, or will the judge and the veteran be able to overrule the officer? He will certainly not get judges to act willingly under conditions of that kind. It is not natural that they should. Furthermore, it is not in the public interest. If you are going to bring the judges into this matter, make them responsible, but see to it that the public look to them as the responsible parties to do the fair and just thing between the veteran and the officer, and do not let the judge escape under the plea that these people had as much say in the matter as he had. I believe the public interest would be best served in that way, and I am sure if the minister will just revolve this matter in his mind for a few days he will come to the conclusion that it will be best served by centering the responsibility right on the judge. If the responsibility is there he will discharge it to the best of his capacity. It is quite true that one judge may decide upon a certain amount as the value of the land, and the decision of another judge might be at variance with that decision, and so on over the whole area. But it is equally true, no matter what tribunal is established, that another tribunal in another district will have a standard which is somewhat different. That cannot be avoided. The only way to avoid it would be to have some appellate tribunal to whom all could appeal. There are some objections to this proposition, and the difficulty may prove in the end to be unavoidable, but I hope it can be avoided. You cannot get absolute justice in all cases. The minister in his measure does not aim at absolute justice; it cannot be obtained. You are going to have scores of cases where the soldiers are dead, some of them having paid for their whole farms in full. Those men cannot be reached, but in justice their heirs are entitled to this boon the same as those on the land—probably more entitled than any of them, because they are the men who, facing the handicap of the purchase at a high price, fought the battle out and settled with their creditors in full. You cannot meet those cases. We are not aiming at any absolute justice. We are aiming at a rough method, as close to accuracy as we can get, to meet a very difficult situation

that cannot be avoided, and I hope the minister will not inject into the tribunals off-side officials who are going to dissipate the responsibility and in the end very much impair the efficiency and the measure of justice that will be meted out.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I have a great deal of admiration for the knowledge acquired by the officers of the Soldier Settlement Board, but I may say that there is a very practical difficulty in connection with the adjustments which take place. For example, last year I met a soldier at Stony Plain who was very much dissatisfied because he had not purchased stock to the same extent as his neighbour, who had been given back forty per cent of the purchase price; consequently this soldier, unlike his neighbour, got no readjustment. He was making good; he was one of the fortunate soldiers who were making their payments. He had been frugal and careful, but he felt that an injury had been done him. Now the human element enters into this matter very strongly. My right hon. friend has suggested—and I confess the scheme has a great deal of merit in it—that a representative of the board and the soldier get together and see if they cannot reconcile their differences, and if they can, that that adjustment be surveyed by the board. I think that is a fair description of the scheme proposed by my right hon. friend. But the human element that enters into the matter as between the soldier and the representative of the board rather puts the board, in my opinion, in a very delicate position. There are so many angles to this matter that I would be inclined to think very favourably of the suggestion of my right hon. friend. It would be desirable if we could eliminate the feeling that sometimes arises. Here are two men who sit down together. Naturally their sympathies are identical; the government is going to be the payee, and perhaps too generous a settlement might be made in some cases; whereas in other cases if there is a little feeling of resentment against any particular settler, that might be exercised against him, and I fear the case as presented to the judge would not be brought quite as clearly to his attention as it would in the case of another settler. I quite understand that the judge can proceed, if he desires, and hear evidence. However, I am very willing to take the matter into consideration for the next few days, to discuss it with all those who are interested and see if we cannot arrive at some settlement that will be satisfactory to